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Building the NATO-Russia Relationship

by Sergey Rogov

Conclusions

- Relations between Russia and NATO--not the enlargement of NATO--is the main issue in European security.
- To preserve hopes for a partnership between Russia and NATO, the gap between declarations and reality must be closed. A new cooperative relationship between Russia and the West is possible if it is developed within a year or two.
- Russia would have no reason to consider NATO expansion a threat if Russia and NATO establish an actual, equal partnership.
- A Treaty on Cooperation or a Mutual Security Treaty are the most realistic options for legally binding arrangements between NATO and Russia. Either treaty would require Russia and NATO to agree, *inter alia*, to neither station forces in border territories nor use military threats against any neighboring states, to continue the de-nuclearization process, and update arms control treaties.
- The institutionalization of security cooperation between NATO and Russia requires the creation of an architecture for permanent coordination of foreign and military policies. Russian political participation at the annual NATO summits, involvement in NATO ministerial committees, and the establishment of liaison missions at the military headquarters of both sides would facilitate cooperation.
- The establishment of permanent commissions to cooperate on issues such as the development of defense doctrines, force structure, nuclear policies, and others matters would further enhance security cooperation.

The Need for a New Relationship

Russia should not seek the right of veto in NATO. However, European and other international security issues affecting Russia's vital interests should not be handled without Russia's direct participation.

The main issue as far as European security is concerned is not an enlargement of NATO but relations between Russia and the North Atlantic alliance. If they establish a real rather than a declaratory partnership, an enlarged NATO would hardly pose a threat to vital Russian interests. Admitting the Visegrad Group to NATO would be dangerous only if Russia and the alliance resumed their

military-political rivalry.

Moscow has been unable to specify what it expects from NATO and what forms of cooperation (or alliance) Russia would accept. It is not too late for speeding the formation of a Russian-NATO military-political partnership, complete with reciprocal obligations and the creation of interactive mechanisms. If we delay, as we did in the case of the Russian-U.S. strategic partnership, current opportunities will be irrevocably lost.

Relations with NATO are a key question for Russia. It determines the nature of our relations with the West. If NATO's expansion occurs without due account of legitimate interests of Russia's security, estrangement between Russia and the West will become inevitable. This will not mean, of course, that a new Cold War will automatically follow. But the mechanism of positive interaction in the military and political sphere between Russia and the West will not be established. This will inevitably lead to long-term internal consequences for Russia because an estrangement with the West, and confrontation with the West, cannot but affect Russian economic, democratic and political reforms.

Coinciding Spheres of Interests

There are other coinciding spheres of interest for Russia and NATO:

- maintaining peace and stability in Europe;
- carrying out peacekeeping operations and joint training of peacekeeping forces;
- establishing and strengthening measures for effective civilian political control over the

armed forces;

- blocking the spread of nuclear weapons;
- preventing conflicts;
- eliminating mutual mistrust.

Russia still has a serious interest in a cooperative relationship with the West because it is in Russia's national interests. However, the window for accomplishing this is unlikely to remain open for much more than a year or two. But the situation, when an organization--from which Moscow is excluded--becomes a dominant instrument of security for all Europeans, is not acceptable. Russia is more interested in security structures which include all the states of the continent and of which Russia is a full and equal member.

Russia and NATO could be united by important, strategic interests and hence share a common stake in maintaining stability and security in the world. Yet they have been unable to work out a system of agreeing and coordinating their policies.

An Equal Partnership

To prevent the final collapse of the proclaimed partnership, both sides must close the gap between declarations and reality before it is too late. An equal partnership requires joint definition of common interests and establishment of a mechanism for consultations on decisions to be made as well as the establishment of working bodies for permanent interaction.

Russia and the West should do their best to avoid extreme solutions and think twice before making

decisions on issues that could be crucial to the European security system. But, if there is a strong probability that NATO expansion eastward will become a reality in the near future, the key question becomes the institutionalization of Russian-NATO relations.

- If it is going to be an equal partnership, based on mutual recognition of legitimate interests, why should Russia consider NATO as a threat to its national interests?
- What kind of cooperation should be established between Russia and NATO after NATO expansion?
- What should become the main areas of Russian-NATO cooperation?
- What roles should the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) or other European institutions play in establishing new international security mechanisms?
- Can we imagine that NATO evolution and expansion would strengthen international security and not run counter to the interests of Russia and NATO?
- To seek answers to these questions means to come closer to the solution of this difficult problem.

Mutual Compromise

We should approach Russian-NATO cooperation on the basis of mutual compromise--both sides should do their best to recognize the legitimate security interests of each other--so that it would not be a question of concessions only from the Russian side.

This cooperation could take different forms:

First of all, we need to establish a stable Russian-NATO relationship on a legally binding basis on a wide range of political and military issues. Possible arrangements may include:

- A Non-Aggression Treaty
- A Treaty on Cooperation
- A Mutual Security Treaty
- A Mutual Defense Treaty

A Non-Aggression Treaty may meet minimal security requirements, providing some important reassurances, but it's an agreement of a declaratory nature. Historically such agreements have often been violated. Besides, a Non-Aggression Treaty reflects a situation in which both sides are still concerned about an attack from the other.

A Treaty on Cooperation provides for a more positive relationship between the two sides, and establishes some common security goals and mechanisms for cooperation.

A Mutual Security Treaty goes much further in creating a broad range of common security interests and an institutional network, allowing both sides to cooperate in many ways to promote and protect these interests.

A Mutual Defense Treaty represents the highest form of security cooperation, which is formalized

through clear obligations on military assistance and cooperation to defend each other from external aggression. Institutionally, it may lead to establishment of an integrated military organization.

As far as NATO and Russia are concerned, a Non-Aggression Treaty will probably be insufficient to fully overcome the inertia of the military stand-off inherited from the Cold War period. This relationship fosters competition or even hostility between nations.

On the other hand, a Mutual Defense Treaty between Russia and NATO--at the present moment or in the foreseeable short- and mid-term future--seems to be unlikely. The two sides have not defined sufficiently strong common interests to agree to accept automatic obligations. They are not ready for creation of integrated military institutions either.

Therefore, the more realistic options for legally binding arrangements between NATO and Russia are limited to an agreement along the lines of a Cooperation or Mutual Security Treaty, or something in between.

Guarantees

If the West agrees with this approach, Russia can provide guarantees, for example, not to build Russian conventional forces near neighboring states in the West, not to use military threats against any neighboring state, to continue the denuclearization process, etc.

In the case of NATO expansion, possible NATO commitment could include guarantees not to place military bases or deploy nuclear weapons on the territories of East European states, or conduct activities of the joint military organization of the North Atlantic alliance on the territories of the Baltic states and former Soviet republics. Russia could also demand equal participation in logistic and technological support programs for the military forces of the former Warsaw Pact Treaty (WPT) countries that are potential NATO members. It is also reasonable to ask NATO to guarantee the inviolability of frontiers of the Russian Federation in case of expansion of the alliance. The Kaliningrad salient should be kept intact as well.

Arms Control Regimes

It is necessary to update the arms control regime which is based on the old fashioned principle of parity between NATO and WPT so that NATO expansion should not lead to a new round of the arms race but to lower the still existing high level of militarization in Europe. The Non-proliferation Treaty, the Anti-ballistic Missile Treaty, and Strategic Arms Reduction Treaties should be fully operational. At the same time the Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE) Treaty should be modernized, recognizing the future expansion of NATO. It would be good for Russia and the United States to initiate a new treaty, as a substitute for the existing CFE Treaty, to cut conventional forces in Europe. It should replace bloc levels with national ceilings for all presently existing European states (not just NATO and former WPT countries), as well as lower the ceilings for conventional armaments to correspond to the post-Cold War situation in Europe. The new CFE-2 Treaty should be signed under the OSCE and thus become a visible contribution of this newly created organization to provide security and cooperation on the European continent.

Coordinating Policies

The institutionalization of security cooperation between NATO and Russia demands creation of an

architecture for permanent coordination of the foreign and military policies of both sides. Participation of Russian political leadership (the President or Prime Minister) in the annual NATO summits is a primary aspect of this architecture. Another aspect might involve creation of ministerial committees, bringing together the ministers of defense and foreign affairs. At the working level, the interaction could be arranged through an exchange of liaison missions at the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation in Moscow and at SHAPE in Brussels. Such liaison offices can also be exchanged at the regional levels. Permanent commissions would be needed to deal with specific areas of cooperation, such as:

- Defense doctrines;
- Long term military planning;
- Force structure and defense procurement developments;
- Nuclear policy;
- Military technological cooperation;
- Non-proliferation;
- Civil-military relations.

Inter-relationship of Institutions

If necessary, other institutions could also be created. The new architecture of Europe may at some point provide for an institutionalization of NATO and Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) relations, with the Commonwealth creating a collective security organization on the basis of the Tashkent Treaty signed on May 15, 1992. Obviously, there is no way to do this on a parity basis. The agreements between the two institutions should settle the principles and directions of NATO-CIS cooperation in order to provide international security and not to duplicate the future CFE-2 Treaty. At the same time, it is possible to adopt a new set of confidence building measures in the military field.

The legally binding and institutionalized security cooperation between NATO and Russia should not, of course, be seen as the only regional security arrangement for Europe. It would be only one of the components of the all-European security architecture, including other institutions.

It is especially important to develop the potential of the OSCE. Its role may be expanded to include responsibilities for maintenance and for further strengthening of the arms control regime in Europe. The OSCE could also be given authority to coordinate peacekeeping operations in Europe.

In sum, all current differences notwithstanding, both the Russian Federation and NATO still have common interests in tackling major problems of international security.

Dr. Sergey Rogov is the Director of the Institute of USA and Canada, which is part of the Russian Academy of Sciences. This paper includes remarks Dr. Rogov made at an INSS roundtable on March 27, 1996.

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